



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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Highly Qualified Teachers in Wisconsin

The Reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act “No Child Left Behind” Act of 2001

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The ESEA reauthorization requires that all teachers in core academic subjects be or become “highly qualified” by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The law separates teachers into categories of “new to the profession” and “not new to the profession.” The law also separates teachers into two levels. These are “elementary” and “middle or secondary school.” No definition is provided to differentiate the levels. Wisconsin has determined the following for teachers in our public schools:

1. **Elementary teachers not new** to the profession. These are current teachers who are assigned self-contained classrooms in grades 1-8 who teach all subjects. All fully licensed elementary teachers in Wisconsin are “highly qualified” according to the ESEA definition because they have full State certification as a teacher; have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and they hold at least a bachelor’s degree. Subject competence can be documented by a “high objective uniform State standard of evaluation that...is set by the State for both grade appropriate academic subject matter knowledge and teaching skills.” This last qualifier for teachers is the HOUSE option (i.e. “high objective uniform State standards of evaluation”). Wisconsin standards that meet the HOUSE criteria are in the program approval requirements. All teachers licensed in Wisconsin must have completed an approved program at a college or university, either in this state or in another state. Therefore all current elementary school teachers who teach core academic subjects are in the HOUSE.
2. **Elementary teachers new** to the profession. This means anyone who is in their first teaching job and was hired after the first school day of the 2002-2003 school year (or hired after January 8, 2002 for Title I schools). In order to be “highly qualified” new elementary teachers must meet the criteria in #1 and, in addition, provide evidence that they have “demonstrated subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum... which may consist of a passing level of performance on a State-required certification or licensing test or tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum.” PI 34 requires that prospective elementary teachers take a content test to qualify for a license beginning in 2004-2005. In the interim, students are being assessed (taking tests) in all areas they will be teaching as part of the PI 34 approved program being completed.
3. **Middle and secondary teachers not new** to the profession. Middle school and high school teachers teaching now are considered “highly qualified” since they hold at least a bachelor’s degree and they are able to demonstrate “competence in all the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches based on a high objective uniform State standard of evaluation that...is set by the State for both grade appropriate academic subject matter knowledge and teaching skills.” This last qualifier for teachers is the HOUSE option (i.e. “high objective uniform State Standards of evaluation”). Wisconsin standards that meet the HOUSE criteria are in the program approval requirements. All teachers licensed in Wisconsin must have completed an approved program at a college or university, either in this state or in another state. All current middle and high school teachers who teach core academic subjects are in the HOUSE.
4. **Middle and secondary teachers new** to the profession. This includes those hired after the first day of school in 2002-2003. In order to be “highly qualified” the teacher must hold at least a bachelor’s degree and have demonstrated a high level of competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches by “passing a rigorous State academic subject test in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches (which may consist of a passing level of performance on a State-required certification or licensing test or tests in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches); or...successful completion, in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, of an academic major, a graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major, or advanced certification or credentialing.”

PI 34 requires that middle and secondary teachers take a content test in the subject or subjects they intend to teach beginning in 2004-2005. In the interim, students are taking “tests in each of the academic subjects” they will be teaching as part of the PI 34 approved program being completed.

5. Teachers on **emergency** licenses. Chapter PI 34 allows districts to request special licenses and permits for teachers not fully licensed in emergency situations. Teachers on emergency licenses may be considered “highly qualified” if they are enrolled in a state approved alternative teacher training program that meets federal criteria. This includes high quality professional development before and while teaching, supervision or mentoring while teaching and completing the program in three years or fewer. By definition, any emergency licensed teacher who has enrolled in a DPI approved program to move to full licensure and who completes the required number of credits may qualify.
6. **Special education** teachers. Special education teachers who are teaching core academic subjects must give evidence of being “highly qualified.” Special education teachers not new to the profession are highly qualified if they hold the regular license for their assignment. They qualify through the HOUSE requirement. New special education teachers will be required to take a licensing content test in the basic subjects under PI 34 and will qualify through the test requirement. Special education teachers on emergency licenses may qualify by enrolling in a state approved alternative training program as outlined in #5 above.
7. **Charter** school teachers. The regulations in ESEA state that “Highly Qualified...when used with respect to any teacher teaching in a public charter school...means that the teacher meets the requirements set forth in the State’s public charter school law.” Wisconsin has a charter school license under PI 34 that is authorized in statute. The charter school license may be added to a teacher’s existing license for the purpose of teaching in a public charter school. Teachers who teach core academic subjects in charter schools and who hold the license in that subject area or who hold the charter school license are highly qualified.
8. **Alternative** program teachers. Teachers teaching in alternative programs as defined in statute meet the “highly qualified” requirement in three ways. First they may be teaching in the content area for which they hold a regular license; second they may be teaching in collaboration with a properly licensed teacher; and third they may be teaching an integrated curriculum for students with alternative learning styles for which they have completed an approved program or have the threshold experience in the alternative education content area to qualify for the State alternative education program teacher license.
9. **Substitute** teachers. Short term substitute teachers do not need to be “highly qualified.” Both Wisconsin rules and ESEA mandates allow 20 days in one assignment to be considered “short-term substitute teaching.” If an individual who is not licensed in the subject area or at the level of assignment is in a long term substitute teaching role they must acquire a one-year permit for that assignment. To be considered “highly qualified” they must enroll in an alternative program as outlined in #5 above. If they are not enrolled in a program school officials are required to notify parents of students in their classes that the students are being taught by a teacher who is not “highly qualified” by federal standards.

In Wisconsin “highly qualified” for the purpose of meeting the requirements of ESEA means:

A highly qualified teacher meets all of the requirements of PI 34 for the subjects and levels that he /she is teaching. The requirements include but are not limited to a bachelor's degree, completion of an approved licensing program, and a rigorous exam in the subjects being taught. In addition, a highly qualified teacher may be a teacher of record who is enrolled in a State-approved alternative teacher training program.

Teachers who are not licensed for their assignment or teachers with special licenses or permits who are not enrolled in an alternative training program **are not** highly qualified.

Questions regarding the Wisconsin interpretation of the NCLB “highly qualified” teacher may be directed to:

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